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A REVIEW OF THE CACAO SITUATION IN FERNANDO PO

Fernando Po could well be called the capitol of cacao in West Africa. The first Nigerian and Gold Coast cacao came from this small Island, while the original material came from Latin America. The present economy of the Island depends upon the production of cacao. The crop is produced on large farms (Fincas) ranging in size from 100 acres to 2,000 acres. Yields are high, quality is excellent and there is little loss from disease and insects. The greatest loss is from squirrels. There are 35,000 hectares or 87,500 acres planted at present. The acreage is expanding through two means: (1) The development of new cacao farms; and (2) The replacing of coffee with cacao.

Production

The tonnage of cacao produced is gradually going up. It is believed that within four or five years, the production will be up to 24,500 long tons per year. A comparison is given below of the production for the past three seasons with an estimate for the 1956-57 crop:

<u>Season</u>			
<u>1953-54</u>	<u>1954-55</u>	<u>1955-56</u>	<u>1956-57</u>
<u>Long tons</u>			
15,621	20,500	21,500	22,000

Seasons: The export year is 1 January to 31 December. A crop year is 1 October to 30 September. The cacao harvest season is continuous from 15 June to 15 January. No harvesting is done from January to June.

Per Acre Yield: The average yield is 800 kilos per hectare or over 700 pounds per acre. Many of the better fincas are averaging over 1,400 kilos per ha, or about 1,100 pounds per acre.

Acreage and Age Distribution: Of the 87,500 acres of cacao on Fernando Po, the age distribution of the trees is as follows: 16 percent 0-5 years, 28 percent 5-20 years, 31 percent 20 to 40 years and 25 percent over 40 years.

Insects, Diseases and Pests

Insects: The damage from capsid is very small. The worst insect is the white grub on the cacao roots and dieldrin is being tried.

Diseases: Swollen shoot is not present, but black pod (pinanigra) would cause heavy losses if not controlled. Four copper sulfate sprays are applied each year for the control of black pod. In 1955, the Island used 100 tons of CuSO_4 . Even with all the spraying, the losses average 5 percent from this disease.

Pests: The greatest loss is from squirrels. A poisoning program is not practical for the laborers and natives might eat the poisoned animals. Men travel through the fincas with small rifles and shoot a few squirrels from time to time.

Processing the Crop

The cacao beans are fermented in large boxes and during a period of 3-6 days (depending upon orders), they are turned three times; artificially dried; graded; polished and bagged. This careful processing is a major factor in maintaining the high quality of Fernando Po cacao.

Exports

Spain takes approximately 75 percent of the total production. It is reported that the officials on Fernando Po are most anxious to increase exports to the U. S. A.

Calendar Year Exports (Long tons)

Period	Quantity
Average:	
1940-44	13,200
1945-49	13,800
1950	14,800
1951	9,800
1952	17,700
1953	15,700
1954	19,318
1955	15,293
1956 (up to July)	12,258

Disposition of the 1954-55 Crop
(Long tons)

Country of destination	Quantity
Spain	14,897
U. S. A.	1,968
Western Germany	984
Other	1,378
Held over to 1955-56	1,448
Total	20,675

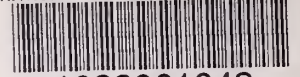
Marketing

The producers belong to cooperatives or are representatives of a present manufacturing company in Spain. Prices are established and shipping schedules prepared by a Commission in Santa Isabel.

Outlook

The acreage of cacao will expand some within the next few years. The expansion will be on new lands and former coffee fincas. High quality and high per acre yield will continue. The annual production will probably stabilize, within the next four or five years, around 24,500 long tons and greater efforts will be to increase cacao exports to the U.S.A.

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